

**APPLYING FOR A PLACE
AT
HIGH SCHOOL
IN
HEREFORDSHIRE
2010-2011**

Important information if your child is eleven before
1st September 2010

**Apply on or before
6th November 2009**

Children & Young People's Directorate
Blackfriars
P.O. Box 185
Blackfriars Street
Hereford HR4 9ZR

**To be read with the
Information for Parents
Booklet 2010-2011**

APPLYING FOR A PLACE AT A HIGH SCHOOL IN HEREFORDSHIRE

1 *How do we apply for a High School place?*

You should begin by reading the information available from the Council and from individual schools. It is also advisable to visit schools in which you are interested in by attending open evenings (details of the agreed Open Evenings will be sent with the individual letters addressed to Parents) or by making other arrangements with the headteacher. Having considered the possibilities, parents should indicate **three preferences in priority order** on the SA1 application form, and return it by 6th November 2009 (see paragraph 5 below), including any school you wish to apply for in **other LA areas**. Please note that your 3 preferences will not be formally analysed until after the closing date of 6th November 2009.

When deciding your preferences you may need to consider carefully **how your child will travel to school**. You will not normally be eligible for transport assistance if your child is offered a place at a high school that is not the catchment school for your child's home address (See Chapter 5 of the Information for Parents Booklet for details of the Council's School Transport policy).

2 *Where can we find more detailed information?*

Chapters 2, 3 & 4 of the Information for Parents Booklet 2010/2011 contains more information about applying for a school place, and Appendix 3 gives details about the Secondary High Schools in Herefordshire. The information is also on the Council's Education Website (www.education.herefordshire.gov.uk). Please read all those sections **BEFORE** completing the SA1 form.

3 *Which is the High School for the address where we live?*

The school for your child's home address is named in the letter provided by the Children Services in September 2009. If you apply for that catchment school by **6th November 2009**, as one of your 3 preferences, you are most likely to be granted a place there irrespective of the priority order in which the school has been placed on your application form. **The reasons for that are explained in section 4 of the Information for Parents Booklet**. Please note that, in cases where the family is living apart or has more than one property, it is the child's principal home that decides which school is the one for his/her area. If you need further help, contact the information line.

4 *When do we apply for a place at High School?*

There is one date by which parents need to apply if they wish to be included in the initial consideration for places in the school year that starts in September 2010. That one date, which also applies to Church schools, is 6th November 2009. Late applications received between 6th November 2009 and the national offer date of 1st March 2010, may be included in the initial consideration but **only if** the reason for the delay was genuine and acceptable. Applications received after 1st March 2010 will be considered only after initial offers have been decided.

5 *Where do we send the completed SA1 form?*

The form should be **returned to the Headteacher of your child's present primary school**. If your child attends an Out of County School or Independent school the form should be returned to Admissions Children & Young People's Directorate Blackfriars PO Box 185 Blackfriars Street Hereford HR4 9ZR by 6th November 2009. **Remember**, if your form is late, or simply not returned, you could lose priority for a place at any of your 3 preferred schools, including the one for your home address and any in other LA's.

6 *Are interviews or ability/aptitude selection part of the admissions process?*

No. Interviews by school must not be part of the admissions process. Similarly, no places are allocated in Herefordshire schools according to ability or aptitude including schools with specialist college status.

7 *Can we apply for a place at a Church School?*

Yes. There are 2 Church Schools in Herefordshire: Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School, which is Anglican, and St. Mary's R.C. High School, Lugwardine, which is Roman Catholic. You can include one or both of these schools **within** the 3 preferences you are able to express on the SA1 form. You will be required to provide additional information if your request is based on denominational reasons. The school's own form, requesting further information, is obtainable from the school for St Mary's RC And for Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School from your priest or minister. This **must be** returned **with the SA1** form by 6th November 2009 as explained in 5 above.

8 *Why am I allowed 3 preferences?*

The Government has decided that all parents must be given the opportunity to express 3 preferences, shown in priority order, for any maintained school within the County of Herefordshire **or in an adjoining County**. Herefordshire welcomes the wider opportunity this gives parents.

9 What happens if too many parents apply for a school?

Places are allocated strictly according to criteria set out in chapter 4 of the Information for Parents Booklet. High priority is given first to pupils with SEN Statements, then to children in public care, then for pupils with sibling living in the school catchment area and then to out of area siblings. Children with brothers and sisters who would still be at the school in September 2009 come next, followed by pupils with validated medical, social or compassionate grounds, and finally according to distance from the school.

10 How will the decisions be made about parents' 3 preferences for high schools?

Everyone who has applied by 6th November 2009 will be told the decision on 1st March 2010, which is the national date for all such announcements. The decision will be reached via the following steps:-

STAGE 1 All applications received by the closing date of 6th November 2009 from parents will be analysed together, but only after that date, along with late applications for which parents have provided genuine explanations. Applications for the schools will be considered against the 6 priorities listed in paragraph 9 above. The Governors of the 2 voluntary aided schools and The Hereford Academy will make decisions based on their criteria shown in Appendix 4 of the Information for Parents Booklet. At stage 1, all 3 preferences are treated as a first preference (i.e. the priority order shown by parents will not count at this point).

STAGE 2 Following analysis, lists will be drawn up of all the parents who have applied (whether as 1st, 2nd or 3rd preference) for each school, according to criteria in chapter 4 of the admissions information book.

STAGE 3 Each parent will then be offered a place at the highest of their 3 preferences (if any) that is available after all higher priority applicants have been allocated places. In the case of parents living in Herefordshire, but applying for a school outside the county .The notifications in 2010 will be given by Herefordshire Local Authority, for Gloucestershire, Shropshire and Worcestershire schools. Parents living outside the County but applying for a Herefordshire school must send the details to their home LA who will send the information direct to the Pupil Admissions Office based in Hereford. Therefore where you live will determine the LA who gives notification of places offered.

However, this position will **not apply** in the case of Monmouthshire and Powys schools for whom we will still offer the places.

STAGE 4 It is possible that some parents will not be offered a place at any of their 3 preferred schools. That usually happens only in the case of parents who have applied for 3 oversubscribed schools and have not included their catchment area school as one of the 3 preferences or parents who have submitted a late application by the offer date without good reason. In such circumstances, the parents will be offered a place at the nearest or most accessible school that still has places available, taking account of any information the parents may already have provided.

11 What are the possible difficulties if your 3 preferences do not include the school provided for your child's home address?

Parents will be able to express 3 preferences for the September 2010 transfer. Parents are asked to consider naming their catchment school as one of their 3 preferences. If they do not and they are unsuccessful with their other preferences it may be that there are no places left at their catchment school after offers are made. Most of the places in high schools are filled by local children. However, if parents do not include the catchment school in their 3 preferences, they will lose their priority for that school if all their chosen schools are oversubscribed. The child may then be required to attend another school altogether, which may involve the parents having to meet any additional transport costs. **For these reasons, it is advisable for parents to include the catchment area school as one of the 3 preferences.**

12 Can we make a case for personal or particular circumstances?

If you wish to apply for a school place for medical, social or compassionate reasons, you **must** send written evidence with your application. Such evidence may include supporting letters from a doctor, social worker, etc. Such reasons will be considered **only if** supporting information is included with your application **and** received by 6th November 2009. The critical test applied is whether the school that is sought is the only one which can meet the individual pupil's needs. We shall advise you of the outcome of the determination of your Special Reasons category by mid January 2010. Please note that this does not apply to Bishop Bluecoat School, St Mary's RC High, The Hereford Academy or a school in another Local Authority as they define their own.

13 My child attends a primary school associated with my preferred High School - do I have any additional priority?

No – the designated High School is based on your child's home address. The fact that your child attends an associated primary school will not give your application any higher priority, unless you are including Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat and / or St Mary's RC in your preferences.

How can we get further help?

The Council has an information line for parents who would like more details. The staff will not advise you about whether or not to apply for a particular school, but are able to provide the following facts:

- The number of parents who applied in the previous year, and (where relevant) the number of children admitted later from the waiting list or after appeal following an initial refusal of a place
- The schools that have had vacancies in previous years
- Criteria under which places were offered

Admissions Information Lines - 01432 260925/260926
Herefordshire Council: schooladmissions@herefordshire.gov.uk

Choice Advisor Service

The council now has a Choice Advisor Service. The Choice adviser offers help and guidance on the schools admissions process to parents and carers of young people transferring to secondary schools. You can phone 01432 260999

Remember:

- You should read the Information Booklet, especially chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, BEFORE applying for a place.
- You must complete an SA1 form to apply for a place at any of the County's high schools, including if you are applying to the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School or St. Mary's R.C. High School. You may also be required to complete additional information if applying for a Church place, which needs to be attached together with SA1 form.
- The Governors of church schools make the initial decisions on all their admissions and will inform the Council who will make the formal offer on the 1st March 2010.
- The closing date for applications is 6th November, 2009.
- Late applications, without good explanation, will have lower priority.

MISLEADING OR FRAUDULENT INFORMATION

The Council will take very seriously any fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. In such cases, the Council could decide to withdraw a school place that has been offered or taken up.